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"On the Sublime in *Dawn*"

by Keith Ansell-Pearson

Every thinker paints his world and every individual thing in it with fewer colours *than actually exist* and is blind to certain particular colours. This is not merely a deficiency. Owing to this approximation and simplification he reads *into the things themselves* colour harmonies that can have great appeal and that can amount to an enrichment of nature, Nietzsche, *Dawn* §426.

Like all conquerors, discoverers, navigators, adventurers, we researchers are of a daring morality and have to put up with being considered, on the whole, evil.—Nietzsche, *Dawn* §432.

Are we then searching for too much when we search for the company of men who have grown mild, savory, and nutritious, like chestnuts that have been placed in the fire and removed at the right time? Who expect less from life and would rather take less as a gift than as something earned, as if the birds and the bees had brought it to them? Who are too proud to be able to feel they could ever be paid what they've earned? And too earnest in their passion for knowledge and honesty as to still have the time and obsequiousness requisite for fame? We could call such men philosophers, but they themselves will still find a more modest name.—Nietzsche, *Dawn* §482.

The atmosphere of 'daybreak', the magic of twilight—one does not know if it is a morning or evening twilight—which constitutes perhaps the most fascinating allure of Nietzsche's works, is in truth a magic of the extreme, the trickling dream shudder of initial doubt about the apparent reality, how it begins to stir under the thin and increasingly colorful surface of the morning dream announcing awakening, in fact already the first breath of awakening itself.—Ernst Bertram[1]

The ocean neither works nor produces; it moves. It does not give life; it contains it, or rather it gives and takes it with the same indifference. It is the grand, eternal cradle rocking its creatures.—Jean-Marie Guyau[2]

1 Ernst Bertram, *Nietzsche: Attempt at a Mythology*, tr. Robert E. Norton (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008): 232-3.

2 Jean-Marie Guyau, *Sketch of Morality without Obligation and Sanction*, tr Gertrude Kapteyn (London: Watts & Co: 1898): 43.

> My demand: to produce beings who stand sublimely (*erhaben dastehen*) above the whole human species: and to sacrifice oneself and one's 'neighbours' to this goal.—Nietzsche, KSA 10, 7 [21], 1883.

Introduction

In this essay I want to explore how the sublime is employed in *Dawn*, especially the final book, book five, of the text.[3] My contention is that in this text Nietzsche is in search of new possibilities for the sublime as a concept and an experience. In the early to mid 1870s Nietzsche has, in essence, figured the sublime in two principal ways. First, as the 'tragic sublime' in the writings on the tragic, in which nauseous thoughts about the dreadful and absurd character of existence, as human beings encounter it, are transformed into mental images with which it is possible to live and in which the sublime represents the artistic taming of the dreadful and the comical the artistic discharge of the dreadful. And, secondly, as the aesthetic concept of greatness in the unpublished materials of 1872-3 and the *Untimelies*, especially the second untimely on the uses and disadvantages for history of life, in which the lesson imparted is the need to 'hold onto the sublime' (*das Festhalten des Erhabenen*) (KSA 7, 19 [22]).[4] In addition, Nietzsche appeals at this time to the sublime as a way of drawing attention to the narrowness of life, of discerning and judging that prevails in German scholarship, including its reliance on domestic and homely virtues, and he contrasts the elevation to greatness afforded by the sublime with what he calls 'Philistine homeliness' (KSA 1, 778-82, especially 779-80). In his thinking on the birth of tragic thought Nietzsche is concerned with how the 'truth' of reality is concealed: the sublime (*das Erhabene*) and the ridiculous represent a step beyond the world of beautiful illusion since both contain a contradiction: 'they are not at all congruent with truth: they are a *concealment (Umschleierung) of truth*' (KSA 1, 595). In *Dawn* Nietzsche's usage of the sublime shifts as it is now implicated in the disclosure of reality: what has hitherto struck humankind as ugly is acknowledged and rendered a new source of beauty—we now have the chance to experience the beautiful in a new way and new experiences of elevation and exaltation are available to us.

Throughout book five of *Dawn* Nietzsche, in accordance with the tradition stretching from Longinus to Kant, employs the sublime in connection with notions of elevation, exaltation, loftiness, ennoblement and the attainment of newly discovered heights of experience. At the same time it is bound up for him with practices of purification and sublimation that involve the conquest and overcoming of traditional and conventional conceptions of reality and of what is possible in experience. In the book Nietzsche is clearly mapping out a transitional humanity that is moving from a heritage of religions and moralities to something new, in fact, to uncharted con-

3 The sublime is employed in the following aphorisms of the text, with a concentration in book five: §§ 33, 45, 169, 210, 423, 427, 435, 449, 459, 461, 542, 553, 570.

4 For further insight see Keith Ansell-Pearson, " 'Holding on to the Sublime': Nietzsche on Philosophy's Perception and Search for Greatness' " in Herman Siemens and Vasti Roodt (eds.), *Nietzsche, Power, and Politics* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009).

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ditions of existence. He is keen to militate against the sublime of dread and terror and to configure the sublime in a more modest and even humbling manner.[5] In Nietzsche's thinking the human is no longer centre stage in the drama that is unfolding; indeed, the task is to overcome ourselves. One might suggest that the overhuman or superhuman is now our new limit and horizon. For Nietzsche, however, this is not to be conceived in terms of a large or inflated human but quite the opposite. There is to be both a new orientation for thinking and a new destiny for the human or what, in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche calls the event of a new purification and consecration (EH: III "The Birth of Tragedy" §4). This is foreshadowed in several aphorisms of book five of *Dawn*. In D 548 Nietzsche announces that the order of rank of greatness for all past mankind remains to be determined (the revaluation of values the book encourages permits this) and D 552 reflects on the meaning of the new purification and consecration.[6]

The fundamental change or turning that Nietzsche is proposing finds expression in his metaphorical usage of the image of the sea (he makes extensive use of nautical metaphors in both *Dawn* and the two subsequent texts, *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*).[7] The ocean is first appropriated for the sublime by Longinus who contrasts its awesome character with beautifully clear small streams.[8] This is then continued in Burke's association of the sublime with the experience of terror: 'A level plain of a vast extent on land, is certainly no mean idea; the prospect of such a plain may be as extensive as a prospect of the ocean; but can it ever fill the mind with any thing so great as the ocean itself?'[9] The reason for this, according to Burke, is owing to the fact that the ocean 'is an object of no small terror' and for him terror is 'the ruling principle of the sublime' (ibid.). For Kant the 'boundless ocean heaved up' is one example of several phenomena of nature where we see at work a dynamical sublime. Here nature is called sublime whenever it 'elevates (*erhebt*) our imagination' by exhibiting cases in which the mind comes to feel its own sublimity, that is, in a vocation that elevates it 'above nature.'[10]

In his early writings Nietzsche employs the idea of the ocean to convey an astonishing philosophical insight into the reality of becoming, one that *initially* strikes mortal human beings as terrifying. He does this in his lecture on Heraclitus in the course at Basel on the pre-Platonics where he notes that confrontation with the insight into 'eternal becoming' has something at first sight that is both terrifying and uncanny: 'the strongest comparison is to the sensation whereby someone in the middle of the ocean or during an earthquake, observes all things in motion.' He

5 The link between the sublime and terror is, of course, the one made by Burke. See Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998): part 1, section VII and part II, section II.

6 The idea of a new purification and consecration appears in Nietzsche as early as his untimely meditation on Wagner in Bayreuth.

7 For further insight, see Duncan Large, "Nietzsche and the Figure of Columbus" in *Nietzsche-Studien*, 24 (1995): 162-183.

8 Longinus, *On the Sublime*, tr T.S. Dorsch (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965): ch. 35.

9 Burke 1998, part II, section II.

10 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, tr Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett, 1987): §28.

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then notes that it requires an 'astonishing power to transmit the effects of the sublime (*des Erhabenen*) and joyful awe to those confronting it' (KGW IV. 2, 272). Heraclitus comes up with a 'sublime image' (*erhabenes Gleichniss*) to do just this: 'only in the play of the child (or that of the artist) does there exist a Becoming and Passing Away without any moralistic calculations' (ibid. 278). It is not that we rise above nature and experience the superior power of human Reason, as in Kant; it is rather that we recognize nature, qua becoming, as the superior power and in 'play' we are one with its lack of teleology. In *Dawn* Nietzsche appears keen to replace the sublime of sheer terror with a new sublime of human self-conquest and overcoming in which the sea represents the uncharted future, the comprehensive space beyond familiar land in which the human can purify itself. Nietzsche makes this clear in both the prologue and several discourses in *Zarathustra*, which continues the main lessons of book five of *Dawn*: 'In truth, the human is a polluted river. One must be a sea, to receive a polluted river and not be defiled. Behold, I teach you the Superhuman: he is this sea, in him your great contempt can go under' (Z: Prologue §3); and, 'There are a thousand paths that have never yet been trodden, a thousand forms of health and hidden islands of life. The human and the human's earth are still unexhausted and undiscovered' (Z: I, "Of the Bestowing Virtue" §2). The task of humanity overcoming itself consists in it freeing itself of its former sense of its (supra-terrestrial) meaning and destiny. The task now, we might say, is to remain true to the earth.

Nihilism is not yet knocking at the door for Nietzsche because (a) there is the 'passion of knowledge', and (b) knowledge enables us, so long as we exist and prosper, to relearn ourselves: the depths are both within us and outside us.[11] Nietzsche advises us to go slowly and wisely:

> *Small doses*.—If you want to effect the most profound transformation possible, then administer the means in the smallest doses, but unremittingly and over long periods of time! What great things can be accomplished at one fell swoop? Thus we want to guard against exchanging head over heels and with acts of violence the moral condition we are used to for a new evaluation of things—no, we want to keep on living in that condition for a long, long time—until we, very late, presumably, become fully aware that the *new evaluation* has become the predominant force and that the small doses of it, *to which we will have to grow accustomed from now on*, have laid down in us a new nature (D §534; KSA 3, 305).

Dawn was researched between January 1880 and May 1881 and published in the early summer of 1881. It is one of Nietzsche's 'yes-saying' books, a work of enlightenment which 'pours out its light, its love, and its delicacy over nothing but bad things,' giving back to these

11 I thus disagree with Large who sees the emergence of the overhuman in Nietzsche's utilization of the Columbus figure in 1881-2 but who reads Nietzsche as largely concerned with the depths of the inside. See Large 1995, 172: The "open sea" represents a reorientation of the infinite, which is no longer to be sought in the metaphysical world *above*, for its immensity lies *within*.' In his lecture on Heraclitus in the course on the pre-Platonic philosophers Nietzsche notes that, 'Nature is just as infinite inwardly as it is outwardly…'

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things the 'lofty right and *prerogative* of existence' (EH: III "Daybreak" §1). The Indian motto, 'there are so many dawns that have not yet broken' lies inscribed on the door to it (ibid). Peter Gast had written the motto on the title page whilst making a fair copy of the manuscript and this, in fact, inspired Nietzsche to adopt the new title and replace its original title of 'The Ploughshare.' From the vantage point of 1888 Nietzsche speaks of the book as amounting to a search for the new morning that ushers in a whole series of new days. He insists that not a single negative word is to be found in it, and no attack or malice either (in other texts he will make use of 'sublime malice'). In this book we encounter a thinker who lies in the sun, 'like a sea creature sunning itself among rocks' (ibid)—and the book was conceived in the rocks near Genoa in solitude and where, so Nietzsche discloses, he 'had secrets to share with the sea.'

One further point is worth taking note of before commencing the analysis into the sublime. The questions and problems that Nietzsche is concerned with in *Dawn* are not pursued by him in a linear or sequential fashion. Book five opens on a highly curious and enigmatic note with an aphorism on the great silence and the muteness of the sea and the final aphorism of the book reconnects with this motif of the sea. But other than this there is no fixed order to the aphorisms of the book. In aphorism 454 entitled 'Interpolation' Nietzsche says that a book like *Dawn* is not for reading straight through or reading aloud but for dipping into and especially when one is out walking or on a journey: 'you must be able to stick your head into it and out again over and over and find about you nothing you are used to' (D §454; KSA 3, 274). There is nothing arbitrary or random about Nietzsche's selection of topics and problems, and why he elected to write in this non-linear fashion one can only speculate. My guess is that it has to do with what he thinks is now at stake for philosophy as it participates in the passion of knowledge.

The Dawn and Dread of the Sublime

In one of the text's opening aphorisms Nietzsche argues that, 'We must again rid the world of much *false* grandeur' (*Grossartigkeit*)[12] simply because 'it offends against the justice which all things may lay claim to from us' (D §4; KSA 3, 20). In fact, the task goes much deeper than this since we are in the process of unlearning an inherited symbolism. The task of purifying ourselves of this inheritance involves inquiring into the origins and sources of the sublime. This is something Nietzsche had already begun to undertake in the previous text, *Human, All Too Human* where, for example, he had located the origins of the sublime in the religious cult (HH §130). Aphorism 33 of *Dawn* continues this inquiry. Here Nietzsche notes that for primitive humanity some evil chance event is interpreted in terms of a demonic power and caprice; there is no investigation into the natural causes of the phenomenon since the demonic cause is taken for granted. In this mental schema we have a demonic cause and a supernatural consequence, such as the punishments and mercies administered by the divinity, in which the sense for reality and taking pleasure

12 The adjectival *grossartig* has the sense of the 'sublime' and should not be lost on the reader.

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in it is spoiled: reality only has value to the extent that '*it is capable of being a symbol*.' It is, therefore, under the spell of the ancient morality of custom that man disdains the causes, the effects, and reality (*Wirklichkeit*) and 'spins all his higher feelings of reverence, sublimity [or sublime exaltation] (*Erhabenheit*), pride, gratitude, and love *from an imaginary world*: the so-called higher world' (D §33; KSA 3, 42). The results of the process are, Nietzsche thinks, perceptible today: 'wherever a man's feelings are *exalted* (*erhebt*), the imaginary world is involved in some way.' It is for this reason that today the scientific human being has to be suspicious of all higher feelings, so tremendously nourished are they by delusion and nonsense: 'Not that they necessarily are or forever have to be: but of all the gradual purifications (*Reinigungen*) awaiting humanity, the purification of the higher feelings will no doubt be one of the most gradual' (ibid; 43).

This reorientation of thinking, including of sublime states, guides Nietzsche's philosophical practice in 1880-1, and what inspires it is nothing other than the free spirited conscience. We can no longer simply trust our feelings since these are nothing original or final; behind feelings stand judgements and evaluations inherited in the form of feelings (inclinations and aversions): 'Inspiration that stems from a feeling is the grandchild of a judgement—and often a wrong one!—and in any case, not a child of your own!' (D §35) Only our own reason and experience can replace the inherited obedience of ancestors and stand as a test of authenticity (see also GS §335).

In aphorism 45 of *Dawn* entitled 'A tragic ending for knowledge' (*Erkenntniss*) Nietzsche notes that it is human sacrifice that has traditionally served as the means of producing exaltation (*Erhebung*); this sacrifice has both elevated (*erhoben*) and exalted (*gehoben*) the human being. What if mankind were to now sacrifice itself: to whom would it make the sacrifice? Nietzsche suggests that it would be 'the knowledge of truth' since only here could the goal be said to be commensurate with the sacrifice, 'because for this goal no sacrifice is too great.'[13] But this goal remains too distant and lofty; much closer to home is the task of working out the extent to which humanity can take steps towards the advancement of knowledge and ascertaining what kind of knowledge-drive could impel it to the point of extinction 'with the light of an anticipatory wisdom in its eyes'. But perhaps here too we discover the madness of such a drive if divorced from human ends of cultivation and enhancement of itself into nobler and superior forms:

> Perhaps one day, once an alliance for the purpose of knowledge has been established with inhabitants of other planets and one has communicated one's knowledge from star to star for a few millennia: perhaps then enthusiasm (*Begeisterung*) for knowledge will swell to such a high tide! (D §45; KSA 3, 52-3)

The problem goes deep because from its history of exaltation humanity has developed

13 See also on this GM: II §7, in which Nietzsche notes that life has always known how to play tricks so as to justify itself, including its 'evil,' and today, for us moderns and free spirits, this takes the form of 'life as a riddle, life as a problem of knowledge.'

within itself much self-abasement, self-hatred, and self-loathing. Nietzsche brings this out in a number of aphorisms. It is as if he is tracing a history of nihilism and pessimism through these insights into exaltation:

> *Belief in Intoxication (Rausch)*—Owing to the contrasts other states of consciousness present and to the wasteful squandering of nervous energy, people who live for exalted and enraptured moments (*erhabenen und verzückten Augenblicke*) are usually wretched and disconsolate; they view those moments as their true self and the misery and despair as the *effect of everything 'outside the self'*; thus the thought of their environment, their age, their entire world fills them with vengeful emotions. Intoxication counts for them as the true life, as the real self . . . Humanity has these rapturous drunkards to thank for a great deal of evil: for they are insatiable sowers of the weeds of dissatisfaction with self and neighbour, of disdain for this world and this time, especially of world-weariness. Perhaps a whole Hell of *criminals* could not muster an impact as sinister and uncanny, as oppressive and ruinous of earth and air into the farthest future as that tiny, noble community of intractable, half-mad fantasists, people of genius which cannot control themselves and who take all possible pleasure in themselves only at the point where they have completely lost themselves . . . (D §50; KSA 3, 54-5)

Nietzsche is dealing with a problem that preoccupies him in book five and throughout the 1880s: the problem of fanaticism (see also GS §347; BGE §10). As he notes, such 'enthusiasts' will seek to implant the faith in intoxication as 'as being that which is actually living in life: a dreadful faith!' (ibid) Such is the extent of Nietzsche's anxiety that he wonders whether humanity as a whole will one day perish by its 'spiritual fire-waters' and those who keep alive the desire for them. Nietzsche is advising us to be on our guard, to be vigilant as philosophers against, 'the half-mad, the fantastic, the fanatical', including so-called human beings of genius who claim to have 'visions' and to have seen things others do not see. We are to be cautious, not credulous, when confronted with the claims of visions, that is to say he adds, 'of a profound mental disturbance . . .' (D §66; KSA 3, 64)

Humanity has attempted to short-circuit the paths to truth and virtue, so we must be harder, aim higher, and demand more of ourselves. In an aphorism entitled 'The Integrity of God' (*Die Redlichkeit Gottes*) he writes: 'All religions reveal a trace of the fact that they owe their origin (*Herkunft*) to an early, immature intellectuality in humanity—they all take with astonishing *levity* the obligation to tell the truth; as yet, they know nothing of a *duty on the part of God* to be truthful towards humanity and clear in His communication' (D §91; KSA 3, 84-5). In D 456, which appears in book five, '*Redlichkeit*' (honesty, integrity, probity) is said for good reason to be mankind's 'youngest virtue' (see also Z: "Of the Afterworldsmen"; and for more on honesty in book five, see D §§ 482, 511, 536, 543, 556).[14] Consider also in this regard the aphorisms 59-

14 'There have always been many sickly people among those who invent fables and long for God:

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61. Nietzsche notes, quite seriously, that Christianity has wanted to free human beings from the *burden* of the demands of morality by showing a shorter way to perfection, perhaps imitating philosophers who wanted a 'royal road to truth' that would avoid wearisome and tedious dialectics or the gathering of rigorously tested facts. In both cases a profound error is at work even though such an error has provided comfort to those caught exhausted and despairing in the wilderness of existence (D §59). Christianity for Nietzsche can fairly be called a 'very *spirited* religion' that has made European humanity something sharp-witted and not only theologically cunning. It is this sharp-wittedness he will build on himself for the task of revaluation and the 'self-sublimation of morality' (D, Preface §4):

> In this spirit, and in league with the powers that be and often the deepest honesty (*Ehrlichkeit*) of devotion, it has *chiselled out* the most refined figures ever yet to exist in human society: the figures of the higher and highest Catholic priesthood, especially when they have descended from a noble race and, from the outset, brought with them an inborn grace of gesture, commanding eyes, and beautiful hands and feet (D §60; KSA 3, 60).

The creation of a mode of life which tames the beast in man, which is the noble end of Christianity, has succeeded in keeping awake 'the feeling of a superhuman (*übermenschlichen*) mission' in the soul and in the body. Here one takes pride in obeying which, Nietzsche notes, is the distinguishing mark of all aristocrats. It is with their 'surpassing beauty and refinement' that the princes of the church prove to the people the church's 'truth' and which is itself the result of a harmony between figure, spirit, and task. Nietzsche then asks whether this attempt at an aristocratic harmony must also go to grave with the end of religions: 'can nothing higher be attained, or even imagined?' (D §60; KSA 3, 61) When Nietzsche invites in the next aphorism sensitive people who are still Christians from the heart to attempt for once the experiment of living without Christianity he is once again in search of an authentic mode of life: 'they owe it to *their faith* in this way for once to sojourn "in the wilderness"—if only to win for themselves the right to a voice on the question whether Christianity is necessary. For the present they cling to their native soil and thence revile the world beyond it . . .' (D §61; KSA 3, 61) After such a wandering beyond his little corner of existence, a Christian may return home, not out of homesickness, but out of sound and honest judgement. Nietzsche sees here a model for future human beings who will one day live in this way with respect to all evaluations of the past: 'one must voluntarily *live through* them once again, and likewise their opposite—in order, in the final analysis, to have the *right* to let them fall through the sieve' (ibid.; 62)

Nietzsche brings book one of *Dawn* to a close by suggesting that Europe remains behind Indian culture in terms of the progress it needs to make with respect to religious matters. He

they have a raging hate for the enlightened human being and for that youngest of virtues which is called honesty' (*Redlichkeit*), Z: I, "Of the Afterworldsmen."

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suggests that it has not yet attained the 'free-minded (*freisinnige*) naiveté' of the Brahmins. The priests of India demonstrated pleasure in thinking in which observances—prayers, ceremonies, sacrifices, and hymns—are celebrated as the givers of all good things. One step further, he adds, and one also throws aside the gods—'which is what Europe will also have to do one day' (D §96; KSA 3, 87). Europe remains distant, he muses, from the level of culture attained in the appearance of the Buddha, the teacher of 'self-redemption.' Nietzsche anticipates an age when all the observances and customs of the old moralities and religions have come to an end, but instead of speculating on what will then emerge into existence, he instead calls for a new community of non-believers to make their sign and communicate with one another: 'There exists today among the different nations of Europe perhaps ten to twenty million people who no longer "believe in God"—is it too much to ask that they *give a sign* to one another?' He imagines these people constituting a new power in Europe, between nations, classes, rulers and subjects, and between the un-peaceable and the most peaceable. Elsewhere in the text Nietzsche will suggest that we live in the time of a 'moral interregnum' in which, with the aid of the new sciences of physiology, medicine, sociology, and solitude, we are in the process of constructing anew the laws of life and action (D §453). At this stage in human development nothing further can be expected of us, the emerging free spirits of Europe, than that we seek to be our own experiments in newfound conditions of existence:

> So it is that according to our taste and talent, we are living either a *preliminary* or a *posterior* existence, and it is best in this interregnum to be to every possible extent our own *reges* and to found little *experimental states* (*Versuchsstaaten*). We are experiments: let us also want to be such! (D §453; KSA 3, 274)

It is with this attitude towards the future that Nietzsche approaches aspects of the sublime, as well as what he calls the 'sublimities of philosophy,' in book five of the text.

The Sea, the Sea

Book five begins with an aphorism on 'In the great silence' that stages an encounter with the sea. The scene Nietzsche depicts is one of stillness and solitude: 'Here is the sea, here we can forget the city.' After the noisy ringing of bells announcing the angelus,[15] which produce the sad and foolish yet sweet noise that divides night and day, all becomes still and the sea lies pale and shimmering but unable or unwilling to speak; similarly, the night sky plays its everlasting evening game with red and yellow and green but chooses not to speak. We are encompassed on all sides by a 'tremendous muteness' that is both lovely and dreadful and at which the heart swells.

15 Since the fourteenth century Catholic churches sounded a bell at morning, noon, and evening as reminder to recite Ave Maria, the prayer that celebrates the annunciation of the both of Christ to Mary by the angel Gabriel. Note by translator Brittain Smith. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Dawn: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, tr. Brittain Smith (Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming).

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But is there not hypocrisy in this silent beauty? Nietzsche invites us to ask. Would it not speak well and evilly if it so wished? Would it not mock our feeling of sympathy (*Mitgefühl*) with it? A voice, Nietzsche's voice, then interrupts and declares, 'so be it! I am not ashamed of being mocked by such powers' (D §423; KSA 3, 259). This voice pities nature for its silence and on account of the malice that ties its tongue. In this scene the heart, the regulating source of life's blood flow, continues to swell and is startled by a new truth: '*it too cannot speak*, it too mocks when the mouth calls something into this beauty, it too enjoys its sweet silent malice' (ibid.; 259-60). The voice begins to hate speech and even thinking for behind every word it hears the error of laughter, of imagination, and delusion. Should one not, then, mock at one's pity and at one's mockery? What riddle of existence are we caught up in? Has not all become dark for the philosophy of the morning? The aphorism concludes as follows:

> O sea! O evening! You are terrible mentors! You teach the human being to *cease* being human! Ought he to sacrifice himself to you? Ought he to become as you are now, pale, shimmering, mute, monstrous (*ungeheuer*), reposing above himself? Sublimely above himself? (*Über sich selber erhaben*) (ibid.; 260)

What sublime state is it that the human being might attain here? How can the human being cease being itself? Is this what has really taken place in this experience? What is the becoming contained within it? Later aphorisms in the book serve to clarify Nietzsche's meaning. I shall come to them shortly. The reader has good reason to pause and reflect on what might be being expressed in the aphorism. Nietzsche's instruction is never simple or straightforward; there is always ambiguity in it. One response might be to suggest that the encounter with the sea challenges the human and its sense of scale and measure, confronting it with something immense and monstrous. But here we have to be careful because of the 'mockery' that greets us in the experience. All the names we might come up with to describe the mute sea will come back to us: profound, eternal, mysterious. Are we not endowing the sea with our own names and virtues?[16] Do we ever escape the net of language, ever escape the human?[17]

The basic contrast Nietzsche is making in the aphorism is between stillness and noise (sea and city): in our encounter with the sea, it might be suggested, we quieten our being, become calm and contemplative, think about more than the here and now, the merely fleeting and transient. In D 485 Nietzsche has 'B' state, 'It seems I need distant perspectives to think well of things.' If in *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche had urged his readers to renounce the first and last things and devote instead their energy and attentiveness to the closest things, the distant things, includ-

16 See Z: II "The Dance Song": " 'Into your eye I looked of late, O Life! And into the unfathomable I seemed them to be sinking. But you pulled me out with a golden fishing-rod; mockingly you laughed when I called you unfathomable. 'So runs the talk of all fishes,' you said: 'What *they* do not fathom is unfathomable. But changeable am I only and wild in all things, a woman and not a virtuous one.' "

17 See D §117 entitled 'In prison,' which ends: 'We sit within our net, we spiders, and whatever we may catch in it, we catch nothing at all except that which allows itself to be caught precisely in *our* net.'

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ing distant times return in *Dawn*, perhaps prompted by an encounter with the sea. The aphorism entitled 'Why what is closest becomes ever more distant' captures this new sense of perspective: 'The more we think about everything that we were and will be, the paler what we are right now becomes . . . We grow more solitary—and indeed *because* the whole flood of humanity resounds around us' (D §441; KSA 3, 269).

We have reason to pause because of the reference to the 'evening.' The dawn-philosophy is a philosophy of the morning and, as such, it has its suspicions about thoughts that come to us in the evening. Several aphorisms in book five address this point. In aphorism 539, for example, Nietzsche draws attention to how our 'seeing' of the world is coloured by different emotions and moods and different hours of the day: 'Doesn't your morning shine upon things differently from your evening?' (D §539; KSA 3, 308) The aphorism entitled "The philosopher and age" begins with Nietzsche declaring that, 'It is not wise to let evening judge the day: for all too often weariness then becomes the judge of energy, success, and good will' (D §542; KSA 3, 309-10).[18] My view is that Nietzsche wishes this encounter of the sea to take place but from it the human is not to cancel itself out of existence but to go out itself and return to itself anew or afresh. For Nietzsche there are different ways of seeing, some more human than others and some which are superhuman (this is what he calls 'pure seeing'; see also D §426 on the 'richer form of seeing'). The encounter with sea and evening serves to inspire us to think about these different ways of seeing; we no longer only inhabit the day with its ordinary, prosaic consciousness. There is another voice even if that voice be silence or our own echo.

After the opening aphorism the next two aphorisms (424-425) consider truth and error and amplify what has been highlighted in the book's opening aphorism: the 'problem' of the human is that it is an erring animal and dwells in the space of error. In 424 Nietzsche notes that errors have hitherto served as forces of consolation for humanity (errors of human judgement regarding freedom of the will, the unity of the world, the character of time, and so on). If today we are seekers of truth and idealists *of knowledge* may we not, then, expect the same from truth? But can truths be capable of producing the effect of consolation? Is it not in the nature of truth precisely not to console? If human beings exist as truthful beings but employ philosophy as therapy in the sense of seeking a cure for themselves, does this not suggest that they are not, in fact, seeking truth at all? But if the character of truth as a whole is one that makes us ill should we not abolish it in the same way the Greeks abolished gods once they were unable to offer consolation?

In 425 Nietzsche spells out the reason for our ambivalent stance towards errors. On the one hand it is on their basis that humanity has been elevated and has excelled itself again and

18 Nietzsche may have been inspired in these reflections by Schopenhauer: 'For the morning is the youth of the day; everything is bright, fresh, and easy; we feel strong and have at our complete disposal all our faculties . . . Evening, on the other hand, is the day's old age; at such a time we are dull, garrulous, and frivolous . . . For night imparts to everything its black color.' See Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena* (in two volumes), tr. E.F.J. Payne (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1974): vol. one, 434-35.

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again, for example, through errors as to its descent, uniqueness, and destiny. On the other hand, it has to be noted that it is through the same errors that unspeakable amounts of suffering, persecution, suspicion, and misery have come into the world. Our moralities do not wed us to the earth as a site of dwelling and thinking; rather, we consider ourselves 'too good and too significant for the earth,' as if we were paying it only a passing visit. The 'proud sufferer' has thus become in the course of human development the highest type of human being that is revered.

Nietzsche clearly wishes to see much, if not all of this, overturned, but in the name of what or for what ends? Aphorism 501, entitled 'Mortal souls,' offers a partial clarification and suggests that it is our terrestrial heritage and conditions of existence that will now constitute our new horizon and limit. In this aphorism Nietzsche seems to be suggesting that it is a question of relearning both knowledge and the human, including human time as mortal time. Clearly, this complicates our conception of what the sublime will now mean for us, that is, the experiences of elevation and exaltation. When we gaze out to sea and encounter its great muteness what is it we experience and of what is it we would want to speak? No definitive answers can be given or need to be given at this point in time or evolution; rather, we are caught in a waiting game, one in which we can 'freely' orient ourselves:

> With regard to knowledge (*Erkenntniss*) the most useful accomplishment is perhaps: that the belief in the immortality of the soul has been abandoned. Now humanity is allowed to wait; now it no longer needs to rush headlong into things and choke down half-examined ideas as formerly it was forced to do. For in those days the salvation of poor 'eternal souls' depended on the extent of their knowledge acquired during a short lifetime; they had to *make a decision* overnight—'knowledge' took on a dreadful importance. (D §501; KSA 3, 294)

Nietzsche argues we are now in a new situation with regard to knowledge and as a result we can conquer anew our courage for error, for experimentation, and for accepting things provisionally. Without the sanction of the old moralities and religions individuals and entire generations, 'can now fix their eyes on tasks of a vastness that would to earlier ages have seemed madness' (ibid.). Humanity has earned the right to self-experimentation and its sacrifices henceforth will be to knowledge.

Aphorism 507 entitled 'Against the tyranny of the true' signals a warning however concerning our devotion to knowledge through experimentation. Here Nietzsche stages an anxiety that takes on a more dramatic form in his later writings, notably the third essay of the *Genealogy* and its questioning of the will to truth. Of course, this is something that has in fact been a feature of his thinking on the mode of the tragic—for example, the need to will illusion—from the beginning. In this aphorism he asks why it should be considered desirable that truth alone should rule and be omnipotent. We can esteem it as a 'great power' but we should not allow it to rule over us in some tyrannical fashion. Much healthier is to allow truth to have opponents and for us to

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find relief from it from time to time, and be at liberty to reside knowingly in 'untruth.' Failure to place truth within a rich economy of life will make truth, and ourselves in the process, 'boring, powerless, and tasteless' (D §507; KSA 3, 297). In the next work, *The Gay Science*, the first three books of which Nietzsche initially conceived as a continuation of *Dawn*, Nietzsche focuses on the task of the *incorporation* (*Einverleibung*) of truth and knowledge and holds this to be our new experiment (GS §110).

A number of questions and doubts might emerge from Nietzsche's outline of this new set of tasks for humanity. Let's accept that we wish to learn to know and become genuine knowers even if, as the preface to the *Genealogy* says, we are knowers who are in fact *unknown* to ourselves (GM: Preface §1). But this does mean and must it mean always as *human* knowers? Would this not mean always playing a part in the same comedy and never being able to see into things except through the same pair of eyes? Might there not be beings with different eyes and better equipped for knowledge? Moreover, if we are condemned to see only with human eyes and to know with human minds does this not signal in fact the *impossibility* of knowledge? As Nietzsche rhetorically puts it, do we come to know at the end of all our knowledge only our own organs? (D §483; see also BGE §15). Will this not lead to misery and disgust with ourselves? These are the questions Nietzsche considers in aphorism 483 and his answer to them provides one clue as to his conception of the image of the sea that the final book of the text starts with. He suggests that even when it proves to be the case that our search for knowledge returns us always to ourselves this does not mean that new knowledge is not to be had for even here we have a form of being that remains largely unknown and unexplored:

> This is a wicked attack—*reason* is attacking you! But tomorrow you will be right back in the midst of knowing (*Erkennen*) again and so also in the midst of unreason, by which I mean: in the *pleasure* (*Lust*) of being human. Let us go down to the sea! (D §483; KSA 3, 287; see also D §539)

The question pops up: why would we from this experience go down to the sea? Would we encounter there only ourselves, or perhaps a challenge to ourselves that would lead us to discover ourselves—and the world—anew? For are we not fundamentally at the core unknown to ourselves? Contra the tendency towards self-loathing, then, Nietzsche is advising us that there are good reasons for taking pleasure or delight in our continuing human-ness. We have reasons to be cheerful and this occupies Nietzsche in aphorism 551 of 'Of future virtues.' The fact that the text compels us to keep raising these questions indicates I think that we are in a new space-time of knowledge and explains the nonlinear character of the arguments. Nietzsche is writing in such a way as to keep his reader not only seduced and captivated by the riddles of existence but also genuinely interested in the new and deeply enigmatic spaces and times of thinking.

In aphorism 551 he argues that the more comprehensible the world becomes for us then

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the more solemnities of every kind have a chance to decrease. In short, through knowledge we can conquer the fear and anxiety that has gripped previous humanity and taught it to kneel down before the incomprehensible and beg for mercy. But is there not attached to this process of enlightenment a corresponding loss of charm about the world and, through the courageousness of our new ways of thinking, a loss of respect for the world and for ourselves? How we will now be stimulated by life? Will the passion of knowledge not implant in future humanity a death-drive? Nihilism is perhaps on the horizon of Nietzsche's thinking at this time but the concept of it does not as yet make its appearance in his writings. The danger he contemplates is that the courage in thinking will advance so far that it will reach a point of supreme arrogance where it considers itself to be above humanity and any concern with human things and problems. This would be a sublime of the sage who sees himself and existence as things farthest beneath him. But where there is danger there is also promise, and Nietzsche invites us to entertain the thought that this species of courage, which is not far from being 'an excessive magnanimity,' might produce a new species of seers who not only look down on humanity and existence from a great lofty height but also communicate to us about the domain of the possible and new possibilities of life. In short, Nietzsche is keen to promote the 'cheerful' philosophy of the morning that is focused on the hope of new dawns, new modes of living, and new (terrestrial) ideals. If there are reasons for nihilism there are also equally good reasons for its exact opposite:

> If only they wanted to let us experience in advance something of the *future virtues*! Or of virtues that will never exist on earth, although they could exist somewhere in the world—of purple-glowing galaxies and the whole Milky Ways of the beautiful! Where are you, you astronomers of the ideal? (D §551; KSA 3, 322)

In seemingly each and every case where we might encounter disappointment, despair, or dejection, Nietzsche counters with thoughts of aspiration and new ambition. Nietzsche does not align his thinking with the cause of spreading fear or terror but instead commits himself to expanding our appreciation of the beautiful:

> The pessimist, who gives all things the blackest and gloomiest colours, makes use of only flames and bolts of lightning, celestial effulgence, and everything that has glaring brilliance and confuses the eye; brightness is only there for him to increase the horror (*Entsetzen*) and to make us sense that things are more terrifying (*Schreckliches*) than they really are (D §561; KSA 3, 327)

Just as several aphorisms address the sublime in book five so do almost an equal number attend to questions of beauty, the beautiful, and the ugly. In aphorism 469 entitled 'The realm of beauty is bigger' Nietzsche suggests that new appreciations of beauty are becoming possible now that we no longer accept the limitation of restricting beauty to the morally good: 'Just as surely

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as evil people have a hundred types of happiness about which the virtuous have no clue, they also have a hundred types of beauty: and many have not yet been discovered' (D §468; KSA 3, 281). In aphorism 550 on 'Knowledge and Beauty' Nietzsche suggests a radical turn or reorientation in our thinking about beauty and reality. He notes that hitherto people have reserved their veneration and feeling of happiness for works of imagination and dissemblance (*Verstellung*) whilst the opposite phenomena leave them cold. Pleasure or delight is taken only by plunging into the depths of semblance (*Schein*) and by taking leave of reality. This developed taste for semblance and appearance over reality has encouraged the aesthetic attitude that takes reality (*Wirklichkeit*) to be something ugly. Contra this development Nietzsche suggests that knowledge of the ugliest reality can be something beautiful for us and the discovery of reality—which is what we 'idealists of knowledge' inquiring into existence are doing—generates for us so many subtle pleasures. Do we not need to ask whether the 'beautiful in itself' makes any sense?

> The happiness of those who seek knowledge increases the amount of beauty in the world and makes everything that is here sunnier; knowledge does not merely place its beauty around things but, in the long run, into things—may future humanity bear witness to this proposition! . . . What danger for their honesty (*Redlichkeit*) of becoming, through this enjoyment, a panegyrist of things! (D §550; KSA 3, 320-1; see also D §§ 433, 513, 515)

The final aphorism of book five returns us to its opening aphorism on the silent sea and is not insignificantly entitled 'We aeronauts of the spirit' (*Wir Luft-Schifffahrer des Geistes*).[19] The aphorism begins by noting that although all the brave birds that fly out into the farthest distance are unable to go on at a certain point, this does not mean we can infer from this that an immense open space did not lay out before them. All that can be inferred is that they had flown as far as they could. The same applies, Nietzsche holds, to all our great teachers and predecessors who have come to a stop and often with weariness (see also D §487 on the wearied philosopher). It is a law of life that it will also be the case with us, 'with you and me,' Nietzsche writes. We can, however, derive sustenance and even consolation from the fact that other birds and other spirits will fly further:

> This insight and faith (*Gläubigkeit*) of ours vies with them in flying up and away; it rises straightaway above our heads and above our impotence into the heights and from there surveys the distance and sees before it flocks of birds which, far more powerful than we are, will strive to get to where we were striving towards and where everything is still sea, sea, sea!—And where, then, do we want to go? Do we want to go *across* the sea? Where is it tearing us towards, this powerful craving that means more to us than

19 As Duncan Large points out, these aeronauts are flying an 'air-ship' and he suggests that their flying out over the sea indicates 'how close is their kinship to their more earthbound, or at least sea-bound mariner-cousins' (1995, 171).

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> any other pleasure? Why precisely in this direction, towards precisely where heretofore all of humanity's suns have *set*? Will it perhaps be said of us one day that we too, *steering toward the west, hoped to reach an India*—that it was, however, our fate (*Loos*) to shipwreck upon infinity? Or, my brothers? Or?—(D §575; KSA 3, 331)

In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche draws attention to the closing of the book (though its search will soon be reopened with *The Gay Science*) and suggests that it is the only book to close in this manner (EH: III "Daybreak" §1).[20] The 'Or?' is necessary because the question is a genuine one; the search admits of no resolution, at least not until humanity reaches a point of completed knowledge with all suns discovered and thoroughly explored. But this is to speak of an infinitely long *durée* and Nietzsche derives his confidence in the future from this. He will continue in his writings to provide instruction on the sea, on our new infinite, offering both encouragement and warnings (see, for example, GS §§ 124-125, 283, 289, 343, 374; Z: II "On the Blissful Islands").

Karl Löwith sought to draw attention to the enigmatic character of the reference to 'India' at the end of Nietzsche's text.[21] Is Buddhism not for Nietzsche, along with Christianity, a nihilistic religion? How do we square this with Nietzsche's claim in *Ecce Homo* that *Dawn* is a great 'yes-saying' work that contains no negative words? Moreover, why is the epigraph to the book—'there are so many dawns that have not yet broken'—called 'Indian'? The interpretation Löwith gives for solving the riddle is highly speculative and focuses on the Nietzsche's insistence on the need for the No as well as the Yes. In a reversal of the Christian meaning of the expression 'By this sign (cross) you will conquer,' which heads D §96, Nietzsche is suggesting that the conquest will take place under the sign that the redemptive God is dead. Buddha is a significant teacher because his religion is one of self-redemption, and this is a valuable step along the way of ultimate redemption from religion and from God. As Löwith points out, in his notebooks of the mid to late 1880s Nietzsche takes Christianity to task for having devalued the value of nihilism as a great purifying movement in which nothing could be 'more useful or more to be encouraged than a thoroughgoing *practical nihilism*' (KSA 13, 14 [9]; WP §247). The lie of the immortal private person and the hope of resurrection serve to deter the actual deed of nihilism, namely, suicide. This explains why in his 'Lenzer Heide' notebook on European nihilism Nietzsche is keen to construe eternal recurrence as 'the most extreme form of nihilism' and why he holds that 'a European

20 For further insight see Large 1995 and Bertram 2008, 237: "The moment of this extreme, unsettled inner "Or?" finds its classical expression perhaps in the last sentences of *Daybreak*, which are also, simultaneously, a classic example of his mastery of the end . . . no matter from which direction we approach him, even Nietzsche's mighty torso always rounds out his intellectual silhouette with a final "Or?" just as all of his works from the *Birth* to *Ecce* finish in the doubling of such an Or. Hardly any of them, however, do so with such calm pride, such regal surrender, such masterly confidence in the face of all "Beyonds" as *Daybreak*.'

21 Karl Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, tr. J. Harvey Lomax (Berkeley & Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1997): 113.

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Buddhism might perhaps be indispensable' (KSA 11, 35 [9]; WP §132).[22] The No-doing precedes the Yes-saying as its purifying precondition. Humanity must become more Greek 'again,' 'for what is Greek was the first great union . . . of everything Oriental and on just that account the *inception* of the European soul, the discovery of *our 'new world'*" (KSA 11, 41 [7]; WP §1051; see Löwith 1987, 115). As Löwith points out, 'the continuation of the revived discovery of the *old* world is "the work of the new Columbus" ' (ibid.). Thus the riddle may perhaps be understood: Nietzsche heads west, to where the sun sets, in order to reach an India in the east where the sun arises anew as eternal Being and life out of the nothing of European Buddhism.

On the Sublimities of Philosophy

In a number of aphorisms scattered throughout book five of *Dawn* Nietzsche configures the operations of philosophy in relation to the sublime and its own sublimities. Philosophy's love of knowledge—and to be a lover of knowledge is for Nietzsche to be an essentially unrequited lover—now develops as a form of passion that shrinks at no sacrifice. In aphorism 429 he notes that our drive to knowledge has become so strong for us that we now cannot tolerate the idea of happiness without knowledge: 'Restless discovering and divining has such an attraction for us, and has grown as indispensable to us as is to the lover his unrequited love . . .' (D §429; KSA 3, 264) We now honestly believe, Nietzsche writes, that 'under the pressure and suffering of this passion the whole of humanity must believe itself to be more sublime (*sich erhabener*) and more consoled than previously, when it had not yet overcome its envy of the cruder pleasure and contentment that result from barbarism' (ibid). We even entertain the thought that humanity might perish of its newfound passion for knowledge, though clearly Nietzsche is not an advocate of this. As he notes, such a thought can hold no sway over us. Our evolution is now bound up with this passion, however, and the task is to allow ourselves to be ennobled and elevated by it: ' . . . if humanity is not destroyed by a *passion* it will be destroyed by a *weakness*: which does one prefer? This is the main question. Do we desire for humanity an end in fire and light or in sand?' (ibid.; KSA 3, 265; see also D §435 on perishing as a '*sublime ruin*' (*erhabene Trümmer*) and not as a 'molehill').

In aphorism 427 Nietzsche employs the sublime to address what philosophy now means and does in relation to the new science (*Wissenschaft*) of knowledge. He draws a comparison with rococo horticulture which arose from the feeling that nature is ugly, savage, and boring and thus the aim was to beautify it. This is now what philosophy does with science, beautifying what

22 See also KSA 11, 35 [82]; WP §1055: 'A pessimistic teaching and way of thinking, an ecstatic nihilism, can under certain conditions be indispensable precisely to the philosopher—as a mighty pressure and hammer with which he breaks and removes degenerate and decaying races to make way for a new order of life, or to implant into that which is degenerate and desires to die a longing for the end.'

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strikes us as ugly, dry, cheerless, and laborious.[23] Philosophy is a species of art and poetry and thus a form of 'entertainment': it wants to entertain 'but, in accordance with its inherited pride, it wants to do this in a more sublime and elevated manner' (*in einer erhabenen und höheren Art*) and before a select audience' (D §427; KSA 3, 263). Nietzsche already has here, then, the conception of the project of 'the gay science' with its mixture of poetry, song, the philosophical aphorism, and dedication to science. In this aphorism from *Dawn* Nietzsche speaks of philosophy enabling us to wander in science as in 'wild nature' and without effort or boredom. Such an ambition for philosophy is one that makes religion, hitherto the highest species of the art of entertainment, superfluous. Eventually a cry of dissent against philosophy may emerge, one voiced by pure scientism and naturalism: ' "back to science," to the nature and naturalness of science!' At this point, Nietzsche notes, an age of humanity's history may then commence that discovers the mightiest beauty in precisely the wild and ugly sides of science, 'just as it was only from the time of Rousseau that one discovered a sense for the beauty of high mountains and the desert' (D §427; KSA 3, 263).[24] In short, Nietzsche can see no good reason why humanity cannot grow in strength and insight with science: even when science deflates it humanity can experience an elevation above itself and the nature of this elevation is best thought about in the clear light of day.

In aphorism 449 Nietzsche appeals to the 'spiritually needy' and considers how the new tasks and new modes of knowledge suppose solitude as their condition. He imagines a time for higher festivals when one freely gives away one's spiritual house and possessions to ones in need. In this condition of solitude the satiated soul lightens the burden of its own soul, eschewing both praise for what it does and avoiding gratitude which is invasive and fails to respect solitude and silence. This is to speak of a new kind of teacher who armed with a handful of knowledge and a bag full of experiences becomes, 'a doctor of the spirit to the indigent and to aid people here and there whose head *is disturbed by opinions* . . .' (D §449; KSA 3, 272) The aim is not to prove that one is right before such a person but rather, 'to speak with him in such a way that . . . he himself says what is right and, proud of the fact, walks away!' Such a teacher exists like a beacon of light offering illumination. Nietzsche imagines this teacher existing in the manner of a new kind of Stoic and inspired by a new sublime:

> To have no advantage, neither better food, nor purer air, nor a more joyful spirit—but to share, to give back, to communicate, to grow poorer! To be able to be humble so as to be accessible to many and humiliating to none! To have experienced much injustice and have crawled through the worm-tunnels of every kind of error in order to be able to reach many hidden souls along their secret paths! Always in a type of love and a type of self-interest and self-enjoyment! To be in possession of a dominion and at the

23 See also Z: I, "Of War and Warriors": "Are you ugly? Very well, my brothers! Take the sublime (*das Erhabene*) about you, the mantle of the ugly!"

24 On Rousseau's creation of a new and original emotion compare Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, tr. R. Ashley Audra & Cloudesley Brereton (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979): 41-2.

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same time inconspicuous and renouncing! To lie constantly in the sun and the kindness of grace and yet to know that the paths rising to the sublime (*zum Erhabenen*) are right at hand!—That would be a life! That would be a reason to live, to live a long time. (ibid.)

In this new mode of life one is strengthened and encouraged by the promise of the sublime and with a love that at one and the same time centres on ourselves and yet freely gives to others. Interestingly, in his treatment of the ancient Greeks Nietzsche had viewed tragic art as the means by which a people had conquered a world-weary pessimism (e.g. the wisdom of Silenus) and to the point where they loved life to such an extent that they wanted long lives. The pain and suffering of life no longer counted as an objection but became the grounds of a beautifying and sublime transfiguration of existence. In book five of *Dawn* he is now envisaging how such comportment towards life can exist for us modern free spirits who have renounced so much (God, religion, the first and last things, romantic music, and so on). In D §440 Nietzsche in fact raises the question whether the philosopher of the morning is really renouncing things or gaining a new cheerfulness or serenity:

> To relinquish the world without knowing it, like a *nun*—that leads to an infertile, perhaps melancholic solitude. This has nothing in common with the solitude of the thinker's *vita contemplativa*: when he elects *it*, he in no way wishes to renounce; on the contrary, it would amount to renunciation, melancholy, downfall of his self for him to have to endure the *vita practica*: he relinquishes the latter because he knows it, knows himself. Thus he leaps into *his* water, thus he attains *his* serenity. (D §440; KSA 3, 69)

For the thinker who now has the new dedication to knowledge and can recognise the extent of its future-oriented character—it is such because the discoveries of knowledge always run ahead of a humanity that in time will seek to become equal to it—existence is lived magnanimously. In aphorism 459 entitled 'The thinker's magnanimity' Nietzsche writes:

> Rousseau and Schopenhauer—both were proud enough to inscribe upon their existence the motto: *vitam impendere vero* ('to dedicate one's life to truth'). And again—how they both must have suffered in their pride that they could not succeed in making *verum impendere vitae*! ('to dedicate truth to life')—*verum*, as each of them understood it—in that their lives tagged along beside their knowledge like a temperamental bass that refuses to stay in tune with the melody! But knowledge would be in a sorry state if it was meted out to every thinker only as it suited his person! And thinkers would be in a sorry state if their vanity were so great that they could only endure this! The great thinker's most beautiful virtue radiates precisely from: the magnanimity with which he, as a person of knowledge (*Erkennender*), undauntedly, often shamed, often with sublime mockery (*mit erhabenem Spotte*) and smiling—offers himself and

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his life in sacrifice (D §459; KSA 3, 276)

Neither Rousseau nor Schopenhauer, Nietzsche is arguing, were cognitively mature enough to allow for knowledge and life to enter into a new marriage in which knowledge elevates and pulls life up with it: their emotional personalities interfered too much to permit this process to take place.[25]

We can contrast this with the depiction Nietzsche provides of the likes of Plato, Spinoza, and Goethe in aphorism 497 entitled 'The purifying eye.'[26] In the genius of these natures we find a spirit that is only loosely bound to character and temperament, 'like a winged essence that can separate itself from the latter and soar high above them' (D §497; KSA 3, 292). Nietzsche then contrasts this genius with another kind, namely, those thinkers who boast of it but who in fact have never escaped from their temperament, and he gives as an example the case of Schopenhauer. Such geniuses are unable to fly above and beyond themselves but only ever encounter themselves wherever they fly. Nietzsche does not deny that such genius can amount to greatness, but he is keen to point out that what they lack is that which is to be truly prized—'the *pure, purifying eye*.' Such an eye is not restricted in its vision by the partial sightedness created by character and temperament and can gaze at the world 'as if it were a god, a god it loves.' Although these geniuses are teachers of 'pure seeing,' Nietzsche is keen to stress that such seeing requires apprenticeship and long practice. In aphorism 542 on 'The philosopher and old age' Nietzsche offers a warning about the noblest kind of genius such as we find in Plato. This consists in having belief in one's own genius to the point where the thinker permits himself the right to decree rather than to prove. In effect the thinker has reached a state of spiritual fatigue and chooses to enjoy the results of their thinking instead of testing them out again and again. At this point the old thinker believes he has elevated (*erhebt*) himself above his life's work when in actuality he has infused his thought with rhapsodies, poetic fog and mystic lights (D §542; KSA 3, 311). Such a thinker wants to found institutions that will bear his name and no longer build new edifices of thought. He wants to create a legacy with 'confirmed party supporters, unproblematic and safe comrades,' coming close to inventing a religion in order to have community and have himself canonized. Nietzsche notes poignantly: 'Whenever a great thinker wants to turn himself into a binding institution for the future of humankind, one may be certain that he is past the peak of his

25 On Schopenhauer compare Wittgenstein: 'Schopenhauer is quite a *crude* mind, one might say. I.e. though he has refinement, this suddenly becomes exhausted at a certain level and the he is as crude as the crudest. Where real depth starts, his comes to an end. One could say of Schopenhauer: he never searches his conscience.' Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, tr. Peter Winch (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980): 36e.

26 See also Z: I, "Of the Tree of the Mountainside": " 'The free human of the spirit, too, must purify himself. Much of the prison the rottenness still remains within him: his eye still has to become pure.' " Ironically perhaps, Schopenhauer's own insight into Goethe seems to anticipate Nietzsche: "Such a life, therefore, exalts the man and sets him above fate and its fluctuations. It consists in constant thinking, learning, experimenting, and practising, and gradually becomes the chief existence to which the personal is subordinated as the mere means to an end. An example of the independent and separate nature of this intellectual life is furnished by Goethe" (Schopenhauer 1974: volume two, 75).

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powers and is very weary, very close to the setting of his sun' (D §542).

It is clear that for Nietzsche true genius is something extremely rare simply because so few can free themselves from their temperaments and character.[27] Most of us see existence through a veil or cloak and this occupies Nietzsche's attention in aphorism 539. He challenges us to reflect on whether we are in fact suited for knowing what is true or not. Our mind may be too dull and our vision too crude to permit us access to such knowledge. He runs through the many subjective elements of our perception and vision of the world, how, for example, we are often on the look out for something that affects us strongly and at other times for something that calms us because we are tired: 'Always full of secret predeterminations as to *how* the truth would have to be constituted if you, precisely you, were able to accept it!' (D §539; KSA 3, 308) To attain objectivity of perception is hard for human beings—to be just towards something requires from us warmth and enthusiasm, and the loveable and hateful ego appears to be always present—and may in fact be only attainable in degrees (see also GM: III §12). We may, then, have good reasons for living in fear of our own ghost: 'In the cavern of every type of knowledge, are you not afraid once more of running into your own ghost, the ghost that is the cloak (*verkleidet*) in which truth has disguised itself from you?' (ibid) For Nietzsche both Goethe and Schopenhauer are geniuses: the difference is that one is more capable than the other of 'pure seeing' and hence more profound.

In aphorism 547 on the 'Tyrants of the spirit' Nietzsche suggests that we should no longer feel the need to rush knowledge along to some end point. There is no longer the need, he holds, to approach questions and experiments as if the solutions to them had to correspond to a typical human time span. We are now free to take our time and go slowly: 'To solve everything at one fell swoop, with one single word—that was the secret wish: this was the task one imagined in the image of the Gordian knot or of Columbus' egg; one did not doubt that in the realm of knowledge as well it was possible to reach one's goal after the manner of an Alexander or a Columbus and to solve all questions with *one* answer' (D §547; KSA 3, 317). The idea evolved that there was a riddle to solve for the philosopher and that the task was to compress the problem of the world into the simplest riddle-form: 'The boundless ambition and jubilation of being the "unriddler of the world" were the stuff of thinker's dreams" (ibid.; 318). Under such a schema of the task of thinking philosophy assumed the guise of being a supreme struggle for the tyrannical rule of spirit reserved for a single individual (Nietzsche thinks that it is Schopenhauer who has most recently fancied themselves as such an individual). The lesson to be drawn from this inheritance is that the quest for knowledge has been retarded by the moral narrow-mindedness of its disciples; in the future, Nietzsche declares, 'it must be pursued with a higher and more magnanimous basic feeling: "What do I matter!" stands over the door of the future thinker' (ibid.).

27 Nietzsche's conception of the genius surely has affinities with Schopenhauer who defines genius as 'the highest degree of the *objectivity* of knowledge' (this knowledge is a synthesis of perception and imagination and found in a rare state and abnormal individuals). See Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* (in two volumes), trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York, Dover, 1966): vol. two, 292; see also chapter XXXI.

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In aphorism 553 Nietzsche directly addresses the question of the direction of this new philosophy of the morning: where is it headed with all its detours? He himself raises the suspicion that it may be little more than the translation into reason of a concentrated drive, 'for mild sunshine, clearer and fresher air, southerly vegetation, sea air, transient digests of meat, eggs, and fruit, hot water to drink, daylong silent wanderings . . . almost soldierly habits', and so on. In short, is it a philosophy 'that at bottom is the instinct for a personal diet' and hygiene, one that suits a particular idiosyncratic taste and for whom it alone is beneficial? (D §553; KSA 3, 323) He continues:

> An instinct that is searching for my own air, my own heights, my own weather, my own type of health, through the detour of my head? There are many other and certainly more loftier sublimities (*höhere Erhabenheiten*) of philosophy and not just those that are more gloomy and more ambitious than mine—perhaps they too are, each and every one, nothing than intellectual detours for these kinds of personal drives?—In the meantime (*Inzwischen*) I observe with new eyes the secret and solitary swarming of a butterfly high on the rocky seashore where many good plants are growing; it flies about, untroubled that it only has one more day yet to live and that the night will be too cold for its winged fragility. One could certainly come up with a philosophy for it as well: although it is not likely to be mine. (ibid.; KSA 3, 323-4)

Although Nietzsche can observe and appreciate the butterfly in a new way, as he now can all things of nature, its mode of life is too simple and untroubled in contrast to the philosophy of life his search is opening up, which is one of deep and troubled fascination and with ever-new peaks of elevation.

Two points are to be considered here: first, it is Nietzsche's intellectual integrity that leads him to be honest on this point and to raise the question whether philosophy is anything more than a means to satisfy a personal drive or set of drives; second, it is not until later in the 1880s that he will adequately answer the question in a more direct manner. He does so in the prefaces he wrote to new editions of his books in 1886 and 1887, and what comes across in them is Nietzsche's generosity as a thinker: the philosophy of the morning and the gay science are open to anyone in whom a 'task' grows and wishes to be incarnate:

> This is how the free spirit gives himself an answer concerning the riddle of liberation and ends by generalizing his own case and this reaching a decision about his own experience: "What I went through, he tells himself, must be gone through by everyone in whom there is a *task* that wants to be embodied and 'to come into the world . . .' " (HH, Preface §7)

In fact, the direction of this philosophy is clear and is stated in firm terms in the next work,

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The Gay Science. The direction is one of purification for those who wish to become the ones that they are, 'new, unique, incomparable, self-creating, self-legislating': in short, the human-superhuman ones and who can only become this by purifying themselves of their opinions and valuations (GS §335). In short, drives are important but not all that is at stake. The ultimate goal is authenticity or the task of becoming one's own lawgiver.

Conclusion

Kant chose the figure of Copernicus to depict his philosophical revolution. Nietzsche selects the figure of a new Columbus to promote the new orientation for thinking being outlined in his middle period work. With the disorientating event of the death of God that which is the highest and that which is most comprehensive—the sun and the sea—and with it humanity's entire previous horizon disappear and give rise to a new sea.[28] The need for new orientation adds hidden depths to what is typically construed as Nietzsche's transitional embrace of 'positivism' at this time. Mostly written in Genoa, *Dawn* is a book that journeys into the future and which for Nietzsche constitutes, in fact, its true destination: 'Even now,' he writes in a letter of March 1881 to his old friend Erwin Rohde, 'there are moments when I walk about on the heights above Genoa having glimpses and feelings such as Columbus once, perhaps from the very same place, sent out across the sea and into the future.' Of this Genoa, Ernst Bertram wrote in his study of Nietzsche of 1918: " . . . that means the sea, it means the secretiveness of the sea, the happiness and the dread it evokes; it means daybreak and beyond, hope without horizon and the most daring adventurousness, godlessness out of profundity, solitude out of a belief in humanity, cynicism out of the will to the highest reverence."[29] In *Dawn* the chief task is clearly laid out: it consists in liberating ourselves from our human inheritance and looking at everything with searching eyes, new eyes. In its suspicion of intoxicated states and concern over the danger of fanaticism, the text continues an enlightenment project. Indeed, Nietzsche saw himself as carrying forward the task of the Enlightenment which he thinks in Germany was only carried out in a half-hearted manner, one that left too much room for obscurantism and reaction (see D §197 where he mentions as retarding developments: German philosophy, German historiography and romanticism, German natural science, and Kant's attempt to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith).

Although Nietzsche will continue to figure the sublime in different ways in subsequent texts, including devoting a discourse to the sublime ones in Z, several crucially important moves have been made by him in the texts of the middle period.[30] They include the following: (a) dis-

28 See Lowith 1997, 41.

29 Bertram 2008, 225. See also Z: I, "On the Bestowing Virtue": "And this is the Great Midday, when the human stands in the middle of its path between beast and superhuman and celebrates its way to evening as its highest hope, for it is the way to a new morning."

30 In Z: II, "Of the Sublime Human Beings" Nietzsche addresses the 'penitent of the spirit' that are 'decked out with ugly truths' and who have not yet learned of laughter, beauty, and gracefulness

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criminating between the sublime of the sage of old and the new sublimities of philosophy; (b) showing how the sublime can now serve as a point of attraction to new realities and experiences (e.g. the ugly).[31] In HH §217, for example, Nietzsche notes that the ugly aspect of the world, which was originally hostile to the senses, has now been conquered for music: 'its sphere of power especially in the domain of the sublime (*Erhabene*), dreadful, mysterious has therewith increased astonishingly.' In *The Gay Science* Nietzsche will continue to make use of the sublime in both critical and illuminating senses. In the well-known aphorism on giving style to one's character (GS §290), for example, he figures it in the context of this problematic, noting how the ugly that cannot be removed is on the one hand concealed and, on the other, 'reinterpreted and made sublime' (*Erhabene*). In GS §313 he indicates clearly that his intention is not to continue the association of the sublime with images of cruelty and torture: 'I want to proceed as Raphael did and never paint another image of torture. There are enough sublime things (*erhabenen Dinge*) so that one does not have to look for the sublime (*die Erhabenheit*) where it dwells in sisterly association with cruelty.' His ambition, he tells us, could never find satisfaction if he became 'a sublime (*sublimen*) assistant at torture' ('*sublim*' is used here in the sense of 'subtle' or 'refined').[32]

Finally, in Nietzsche's very first and remarkable sketch of August 1881 on the eternal recurrence of the same he reflects on the new passion of knowledge, on the play of truth and error in humanity's evolution, and brings it to a close by speaking of the sublime states that define a free spirited philosophy in search of a new orientation:

> For thinking over: The various *sublime states* (*erhabenen Zustände*) I had to undergo as foundations of the various chapters and their material—regulating in each chapter the expression, style, and pathos—so as to gain an imprint (*Abbildung*) of my ideal, as though through addition. And then to go even higher! (KSA 9, 11 [141])

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and who need to grow weary of their sublimity in order to allow beauty to rise up: ' . . . he should be an exalted one (*Gehobener*) and not only a sublime one (*Erhabener*)—the ether should raise him up (*heben*), the will-less one!' The identity of the sublime ones is unclear: are they Stoic sages, as one commentator has suggested (T. K. Seung, *Goethe, Nietzsche, and Wagner: Their Spinozan Epics of Love and Power* (Lanham & New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006): 191.), or the modern seekers of knowledge Nietzsche refers to in more explicit terms of the first essay of the *Genealogy of Morality*? It is important to appreciate that in this discourse Nietzsche is addressing a quite specific clothing of the sublime in which he is indicating that without the purifying knowledge those who are sublime remain too tied to that which needs to be overcome, namely, the old sources of the sublime and which he has opened up in HH and D. We are not to be huntsmen and women who return from the forest of knowledge gloomy and despondent. See also BGE §45 on the nature of the 'lover of the "great hunt." '

31 For Burke ugliness is consistent with the idea of the sublime but must be united 'with such qualities as excite a strong terror' (Burke 1998, 109). Nietzsche's thinking of the ugly and its transfiguration is quite different and linked to more general concerns about human becoming through continual aesthetic sublimation and transfiguration.

32 See also Nietzsche's letter to Heinrich von Stein of the beginning of December 1882: "I would like to *take away* from human existence some of its heartbreaking and cruel character."

In a recent study of the philosophy of fear Lars Svendsen has argued, in a chapter which considers the sublime and that begins with a position attributed to Nietzsche, that fear is something that lends colour to the world and a world without it would be boring: "In an otherwise secure world, fear can break the boredom. A feeling of fear can have an uplifting effect."[33] Whilst Nietzsche is not oblivious to the shock function fright can sometimes play in human existence,[34] he does not hold in *Dawn* to the position Svendsen credits him with: 'Nietzsche complains that the world has lost much of its charm because we no longer fear it enough' (ibid. 73). In truth, in the passage on which this claim is based—aphorism 551 of *Dawn*—Nietzsche makes no such complaint and his position is much more subtle. It is the aphorism entitled 'Of future virtues,' in which Nietzsche looks forward to new experiences and new possibilities of life, not backwards to previous experiences and ancient reverences. In the aphorism Nietzsche is taking cognizance of several facts as he judges them. He observes that as the world becomes more comprehensible to us the more solemnity of all kinds decreases. Hitherto, he notes, it was *fear* that informed humanity's attitude of reverence as it found itself overcome in the face of the unknown and the mysterious, forcing it to 'sink down before the incomprehensible.' He then asks whether the world will lose some its appeal once a new humanity comes into being that has grown less fearful in the face of the character of the world: might it not also result in our own fearsomeness becoming slighter? His answer is negative and it is such because of the *courage* that he sees as amongst our new virtues; this is a species of courage so courageous that it feels itself to be '*above* people and things,' it is a kind of 'excessive magnanimity' and, he notes, has hitherto been lacking in humanity. Nietzsche concludes the aphorism by declaring the age of 'harmless counterfeiting' to be over and he looks ahead to the 'astronomers of the ideal' who will take over the role of the poets whose task was to be seers who could recount to us 'something of the *possible*!' In short, what Svendsen misses is the key point of book five of Dawn and around which its various insights hinge, namely, the promise of a *new* dawn.

We know where Nietzsche's thought is heading at this point: in the direction of the gay science with its distinctive mood of *Heiterkeit* (cheerfulness). If the point was not clear in the first edition of the text (GS), including the meaning of the announcement of God's death, Nietzsche makes it clear with book five added in 1887—it commences with an aphorism on the meaning of our cheerfulness in the face of this death and this is the opening gambit of a book entitled

33 Lars Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Fear*, tr. John Irons (London: Reaktion Books, 2008). Svendsen's book sets itself a laudable aim: to 'break down the climate of fear that surrounds us today' and that has colonised our life-world (8). The 'fear' at work here is what he calls 'low-intensity fear' (75).

34 In a note of 1872-3 Nietzsche writes, 'Fright (*Das Erschrecken*) is the best part of humanity' (KSA 7, 19 [80]). The context in which he states this is a consideration of the conditions under which we venerate what is rare and great, including what we imagine them to be and including the miraculous. Nietzsche's preoccupation with 'greatness' in the *Untimelies* has to be understood in the context of his attack on a complacent and philistine bourgeois culture. The context of his reflections on the fate of fear and reverence in *Dawn* is quite different and these reflections are part of the philosophy of the free spirit and European wanderer.

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'We Fearless Ones.'[35] We are not, then, to go forwards in a state of fear or in order to excite it:[36]

> We philosophers and 'free spirits' feel . . . as if a new dawn shone upon us; our heart overflows with gratitude, amazement, premonitions, expectation . . . the sea, *our* sea, lies open again; perhaps there has never yet been such an 'open sea'.— (GS §343)

35 This is not to deny that there is not at work in Nietzsche a will to the terrifying and questionable character of existence since this is one of the distinguishing features of the strong type as he conceives it (KSA 12, 10 [168]; WP §852); and cheerfulness in Nietzsche is always a complicated matter and comes from deep sources. The point to be stressed, however, is that Nietzsche always appeals to 'courage' as the best destroyer and to a courageous humanity, not a fearful one. If it is legitimate to construe Nietzsche's entire philosophy as a training in 'the hard school of life' (affirmation of the tragic conditions of existence), it is clear that he holds that such a training must conquer the fear of life. *The Birth of Tragedy* can profitably be read along these lines: '…we are forced to gaze into the terrors (*die Schrecken*) of individual existence—and yet we are not to freeze in fear (*und sollen doch nicht erstarren*)' (BT §17).

36 See the note of March-June 1888 entitled 'Religion as decadence' on this where Nietzsche distinguishes between the fool and the fanatic and the 'two sources' of intoxication: KSA 13, 14 [68]; WP §48.

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